

Study of Voluntary Quits

**Study
examined
claims from
July 2004
through
June 2006**

**10.5%
qualified
under old law,
but denied
under new
law**

**Women were
most affected
by the change
in law**

**71% of people
who quit for
domestic or
marital
reasons are
women**

In 2003, the Legislature passed a law that restricted the reasons a person can quit a job and still qualify for unemployment-insurance benefits. Then-Governor Locke directed the department to track the effects of the new law and report back in June 2005. The study period was only six months and did not allow the full effects to be determined. This study expands on the previous study and provides a more comprehensive look at the effects of the changes to voluntary-quit provisions.

Parameters of the study

- Looked at all unemployment claims from July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005, that were filed by people who had voluntarily quit their jobs – about 31,000 claims.

Key findings

- People who quit their jobs filed just over 31,000 claims during the study period. About 28,000 claims would have been the same under both old and new laws.
- The other claims (nearly 3,300, or 10.5 percent) would have been granted benefits under the old law, but were denied under the new law. This group was the primary focus of this study.

Demographics

- Women were most affected by the change in the law. The denial rate for women increased by 12 percentage points compared to an increase of 8.9 points for men.
- No other single factor showed a significant increase in denials. The department looked at race, language, age group, education level, location, union status, occupation and industry.

Reasons people quit

- Work-related factors, such as reduced hours or wages, abusive working conditions and commute issues, accounted for 43 percent of claims denials.
- Domestic or marital responsibilities, such as losing child care, relocating because of a spouse's job transfer and relocating to marry, accounted for 30 percent of denials.
- Illness or disability of claimant or immediate family member accounted for 27 percent of denials. These were primarily leaves of absence.
- Domestic or marital responsibility showed the most significant disparity along gender lines. More than 71 percent of all denials in this category were women.
- These findings are consistent with the trends identified in the 2005 study.

**Findings
consistent
with 2005
study**

Other findings

- About 2 percent of the people who were denied benefits under the new law filed appeals. Half of the denials were overturned and the people were granted benefits.
- Almost 19 percent of those who were denied subsequently re-qualified for benefits and had been paid a total of \$1.9 million as of June 30, 2006.

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